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1877
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PLEASURES AND PAINS

OF THE

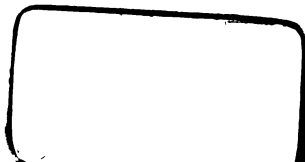
STUDENT'S LIFE.

By SAMUEL GILMAN, D. D.

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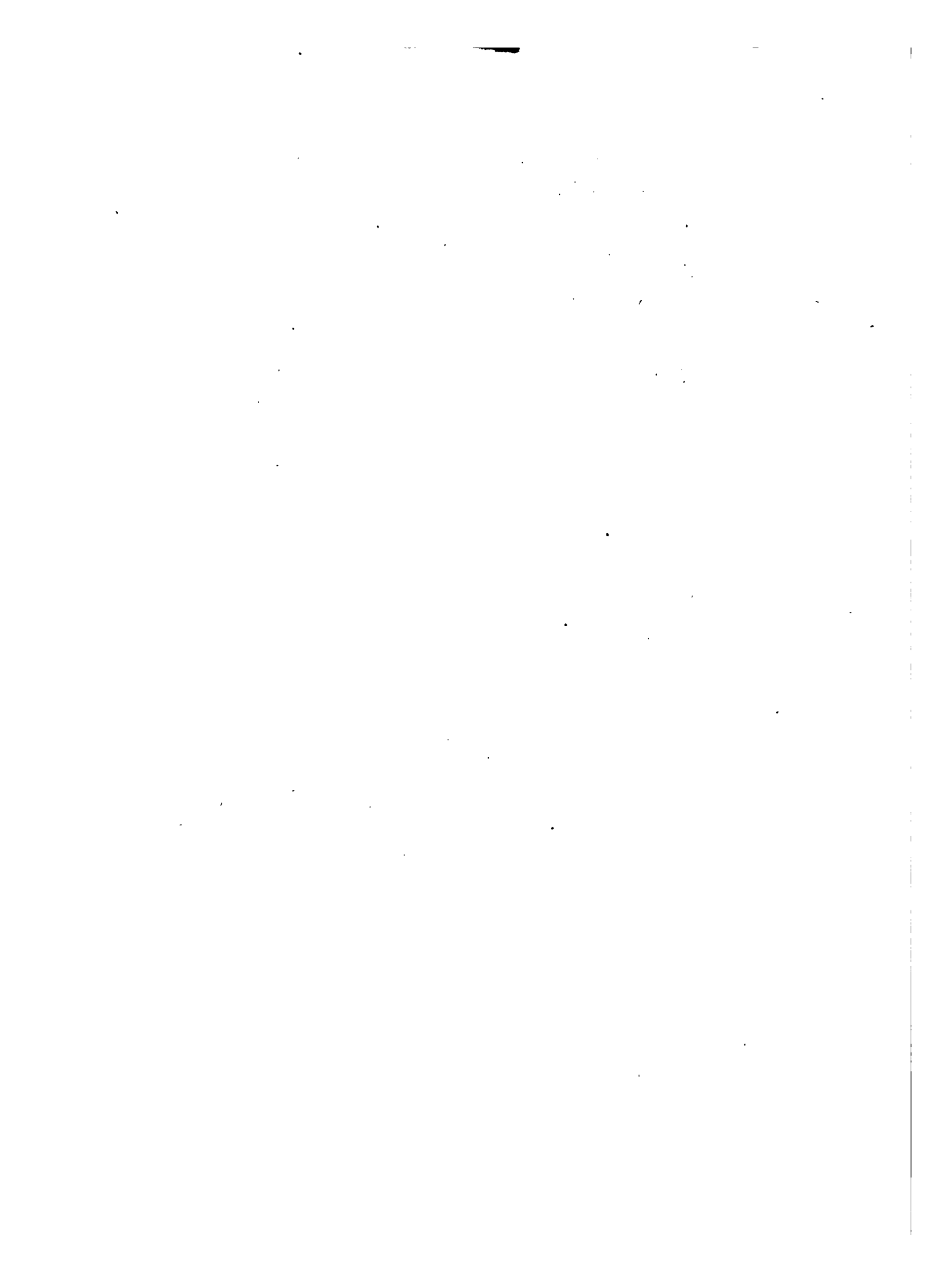
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PLEASURES AND PAINS

OF THE

STUDENT'S LIFE.

By SAMUEL GILMAN, D. D.



PLEASURES AND PAINS

OF THE

STUDENT'S LIFE.

TWO POEMS,

ONE, DELIVERED IN 1811,
AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN HARVARD COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE ;
AND THE OTHER, A SEQUEL TO THE FORMER,
DELIVERED IN 1852,
AT A CLASS-MEETING OF THE SURVIVING GRADUATES
OF THE FIRST NAMED YEAR.

By SAMUEL GILMAN, D. D.

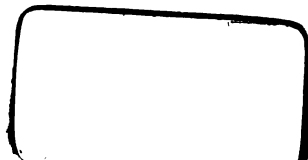
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TO THE
MEMORY OF MY DEPARTED,—
AND TO THE
FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP
OF MY SURVIVING CLASSMATES,—
THESE POEMS
ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

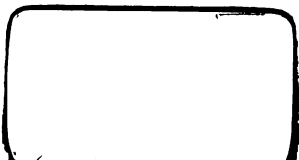
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COMMENCEMENT POEM.

[1811.]

WHEN envious Time, with unrelenting hand,
Dissolves the union of some little band,
A band connected by those hallowed ties,
That from the birth of lettered friendship rise,
Each lingering soul, before the parting sigh,
One moment waits, to view the years gone by ;
Memory still loves to hover o'er the place,
And all our pleasures and our pains retrace.

The Student is the subject of my song ;—
Few are his pleasures, — yet those few are strong ;
Not the gay, transient moment of delight,
Not hurried transports felt but in their flight.

Unlike all else, the Student's joys *endure*, —
 Intense, expansive, energetic, pure.
 Whether o'er classic plains he loves to rove,
 'Midst Attic bowers, or through the Mantuan grove,
 Whether, with scientific eye, to trace
 The various modes of number, time, and space, —
 Whether on wings of heavenly truth to rise,
 And penetrate the secrets of the skies,
 Or, downward tending, with an humble eye,
 Through Nature's laws explore a Deity,
 His are the joys no stranger breast can feel,
 No wit define, no utterance reveal.

Nor yet, alas! unmixed the joys we boast;
 Our pleasures still proportioned labors cost.
 An anxious tear oft fills the Student's eye,
 And his breast heaves with many a struggling sigh.
 His is the task, the long, long task, to explore
 Of every age the lumber and the lore.
 Need I describe his struggles and his strife,
 The thousand minor miseries of his life;

How Application, never-tiring maid,
Oft mourns an aching, oft a dizzy head?
How the hard toil but slowly makes its way,
One word explained, the labor of a day,—
Here forced to search some labyrinth without end,
And there some paradox to comprehend?
Here ten hard words fraught with some meaning
 small,
And there ten folios fraught with none at all?
Or view him meting out, with points and lines,
The land of diagrams and mystic signs,
Where forms of spheres, “being given” on a plane,
He must transform and bend within his brain.
Or, as an author, lost in gloom profound,
When some bright thought demands a period
 round,
Pondering and polishing; ah, what avail
The room oft paced, the anguish-bitten nail?
For see, produced 'mid many a laboring groan,
A sentence much like an inverted cone!

Or, should he try his talent at a rhyme,
That waste of patience and that waste of time,
Perchance, like me, he hammers out one line,
Begins the next, — there stops —.

Enough, no more unveil the cloister's grief; —
Disclose those sources whence it finds relief.
Say how the Student, pausing from his toil,
Forgets his pain 'mid recreation's smile.
Have you not seen, beneath the solar beam,
The wingéd tenants of some haunted stream
Feed eager, busy, by its pebbly side, —
Then wanton in the cool, luxurious tide?
So the wise student ends his busy day,
Unbends his mind, and throws his cares away.
To books where science reigns, and toil severe,
Succeeds the alluring tale, or drama dear.
Or haply, in that hour his taste might choose
The easy warblings of the modern muse.
Let me but paint him void of every care,
Flung in free attitude across his chair.

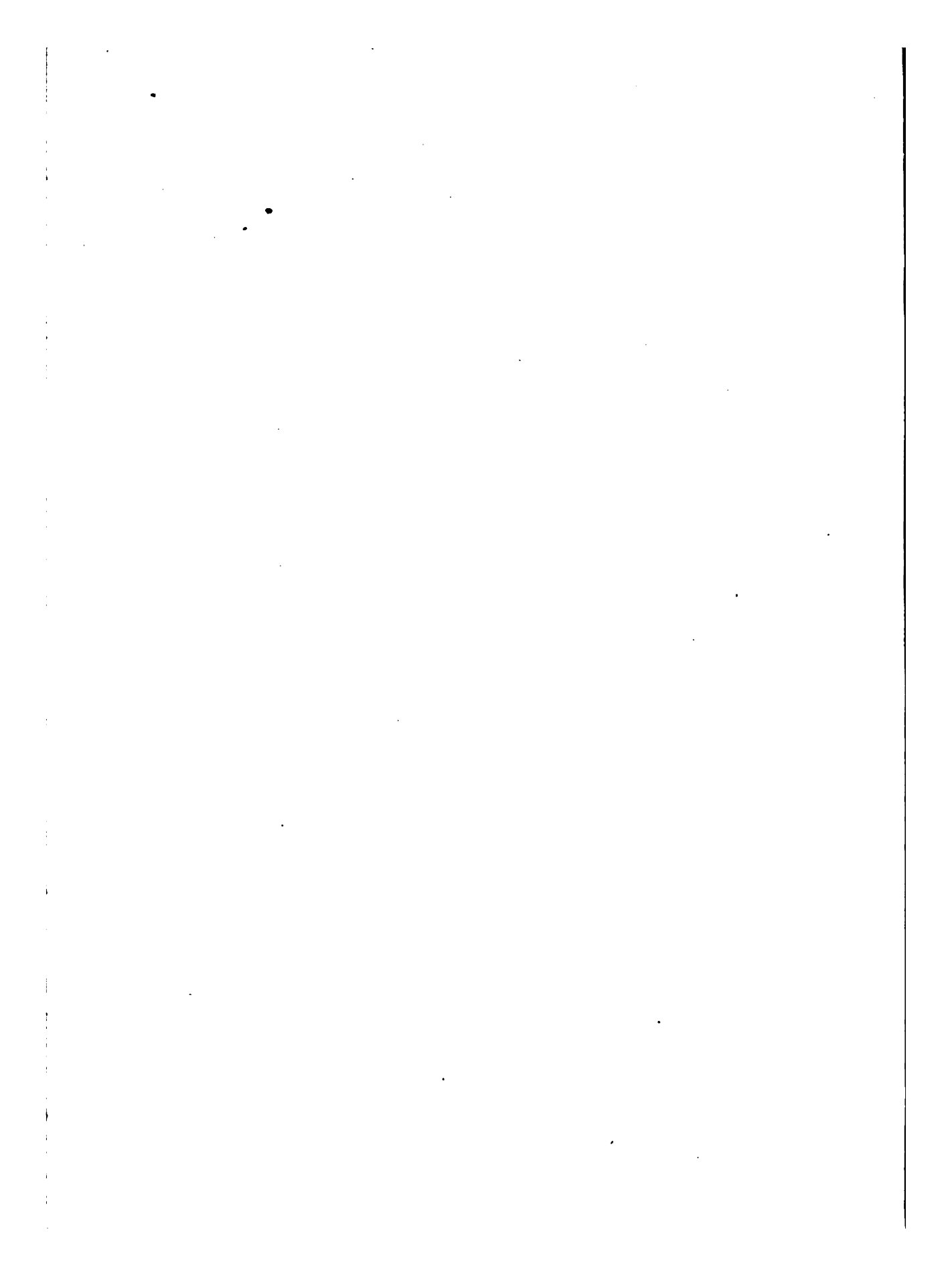
From page to page his rapid eye along
Glances and revels through the magic song ;
Alternate swells his breast with hope and fear,
Now bursts "the unconscious laugh," now falls the
pitying tear.

Yet more ; though lonely joys the bosom warm,
Participation heightens every charm ;
And, should the happy student chance to know
The warmth of friendship, or some kindlier glow,
What wonder, should he swiftly run to share
Some favorite author with some favorite fair !
There, as he cites those treasures of the page
That raise her fancy, or her heart engage,
And listens while her frequent, keen remark
Discerns the brilliant, or illumines the dark,
And doubting much, scarce knows which most
to admire,
The critic's judgment, or the writer's fire,
And, reading, often glances at that face,
Where gently beam intelligence and grace ;

And sees each passion in its turn prevail,
Her looks the very echo of the tale ;
Sees the descending tear, the heaving breast,
When vice exults, or virtue is distressed ;
Or, when the plot assumes an aspect new,
And virtue shares her retribution due,
He sees the grateful smile, the uplifted eye,
Thread, needle, kerchief, dropt in ecstasy, —
Say, can one social pleasure equal this ?

Yet still even here imperfect is the bliss.
For ah ! how oft must awkward learning yield
To graceful dullness the unequal field
Of gallantry ? What lady can endure
The shrug scholastic, or the bow demure ?
Can the poor student hope that heart to gain,
Which melts before the flutter of a cane ?
Which of two rival candidates shall pass,
Where one consults his books, and one his glass ?
Ye fair, if aught these censures may apply,
'Tis yours to effect the vital remedy ;

Ne'er should a fop the sacred bond remove
Between the Aonian and the Paphian grove.
'Tis yours to strengthen, polish, and secure
The lustre of the mind's rich garniture ;
This is the robe that lends you heavenly charms,
And envy of its keenest sting disarms ;
A robe whose grace and richness will outvie
The gems of Ormus, or the Tyrian dye.
 To count one pleasure more, indulge my muse ;—
'Tis friendship's self — what cynic will refuse ?
O, I could tell how oft her joys we shared,
When mutual cares those mutual joys endeared ;
How arm in arm we lingered through the vale,
Listening to many a time-beguiling tale ;
How oft, relaxing from one common toil,
We found repose amid one common smile.
Yes, I could tell, but the dear task how vain !
'T would but increase our fast approaching pain ;
The pain so thrilling to a student's heart,
Couched in that talisman of woe, *We part !*



SEQUEL
TO THE COMMENCEMENT POEM.

[1852.]

[Delivered on the evening of Commencement-Day, at the residence of the Hon.
EDWARD EVERETT, in Boston, whither the Class had been invited to celebrate
the forty-first anniversary of their Graduation]

I, WHO once sang the Student's Joys and Woes,
Would chant, to-night, their *retrospective close*.
Nay, start not, classmates, at such theme of gloom,
Nor charge that I anticipate your doom.
'Tis true, some rare vitality seems given
To the lithe graduates of Eighteen Eleven,
Since but a third of our whole corps appears
Stelligerent¹ in the lapse of forty years ;

¹ A star is prefixed, in College Catalogues, to the names of
deceased graduates.

A proof, perhaps, that spite of youth's elation,
We shunned the fault of over-application!
Yet, though our fated summons be not soon,
We're wearing down life's lessening afternoon;
Not sullenly nor seldom do we hear
The lisped cognomen of "Grandfather dear,"
And startled, bear as bravely as we can,
That graphic title, The Old Gentleman;
Not having reached that period, when the old
Seem pleased and proud to hear their ages told.
So, your indulgence I shall no more ask,
But straight commence my retrospective task.

Still for the Student-Man, as Student-Boy,
Varied has rolled our course with pain and joy.
O those long boding years of work and care,
For our embraced Profession to prepare!
And then those longer years, still doomed to see
No "call of Providence," nor grateful fee!
But, in due time, hope cheered the patient heart;
In life's grand duties we have borne our part;

Have laid our shoulders to the social wheel,
In all that man can do, or think, or feel ;
Have sometimes triumphed with a favorite cause,
And sometimes wept to see it droop, or pause.

Amid these storms and outward cares of life,
Came the dear sunshine of a home and wife.
Not ours the *selfish* scholar's huge mistake,
That household ties rude interruption make.
From those same ties a finer zest we catch,
For every studious moment we can snatch!
If in our ranks some Benedicks there be,
They scarcely muster more than two or three,
And I feel sure, their fault it has not been,
But rather of the world's capricious queen!

As down the Past our grateful memory looks,
Let us confess the bliss we drew from books ;
Those mute companions of the dear-bought hours,
Those quickening Mentors of our dormant powers.
Our inward life how favored, to have found
Such various nutriment spread all around!

Yet, as no good is pure from some alloy,
This rank abundance has impaired our joy.
How hard, the choicest reading to select,
And specious dullness in advance detect!
Into what tomes of nonsense have we dipped,
What modest, solid pages have we skipped!
'Tis pain to think that we must quit this world,
With myriads of the brightest scrolls yet furled.
We snatch but half a life, to leave unread
Great utterings of the living and the dead.
Yes, *I* shall die, before I have looked o'er
Montaigne, and Marlowe, and unnumbered more.
May we not hope, that 'midst the heavenly rest,
One of the "many mansions" of the blest
Shall be a spacious LIBRARY, arrayed
In spirit-volumes from the earth conveyed?
There all that Omar burned shall be restored,
And bright gold bindings clothe the priceless hoard;
New series of celestial works pour in,
Never to end, and ever to begin;

Some sainted Russian shall the books perfume,
 A softened heaven-light shall the place illumine,
 Sweet mystic silence mantle all around,
 Just broken by the outward choral sound;
 One glance a volume's contents comprehend,
 And leisure last whole æons without end!

That heaven of heaven those men may enter in,
 If washed, I mean, from other stain of sin,
 Who, in this world, a book with smiles laid down,
 At the intrusion of some friendly clown;
 All those, in short, who lettered sweets resigned,
 To give their powers in person to mankind.

'Tis pleasure for the Student's thought to trace
 The advance of Art, and Science, and the Race.
 Blest are the eyes that see what we have seen,
 In the brief lapse since our unfledged nineteen.
 Within that handbreadth have been crowded more
 Of marvels than ten centuries knew before;
 While life, and man, and all things here below,
 Show a changed world from forty years ago.

Who would have thought dear Harvard's walls
had stood,

In our young days, had her imperilled brood
To witching Boston been enticed to stray
Four times an hour, instead of twice a day?
Yet of such wonders this is far the least;
We sit at an Arabian-Nights' strange feast.
We witness metamorphoses, that seem
Less like reality than some wild dream.
Through every range of current life extend
Increasing lights and comforts without end;
School-books so plain that babes can understand;
Two morning papers in a cabman's hand;
Mammoth gazettes, each day, as full of new
Fine matter, as the old Critical Review;
Stone-coal, ignited, conquering wintry glooms,
And western lakes upgushing in our rooms.
One fount of lighted gas a city serves,
One whiff of ether calms the frantic nerves;
Steam in a month conveys us round the globe,
Weaves for the nations their protecting robe,

Prints off ten thousand sheets within an hour,
And clothes mankind with preternatural power.
Yet Steam's may be but a Saturnian reign ;
The Electro-Magnet seeks that throne to gain.
Antipodes demand the talking wire ;
Portraits are painted by the solar fire ;¹
New planets ferreted before perceived,
And facts established almost ere believed.
Here, animalcular creations ope,
There, heavens draw near us through the telescope,
And Berenice sees, 'mid polar cars,
Her nebulous locks unbraided into stars.
Nor less in public life have marvels reigned ;
Thrice our torn land its wholeness has regained ;
Our strip of States a continent has grown,
And Europe risen, to circumscribe the Throne.
Yet o'er this wonderful Achilles-Shield,
The trembling Student's tear is oft unsealed.

¹ Speaking with prosaic precision, the Photograph acts only by means of the rays of *light* in the solar beam.

Amid such strides of vast material power,
 He sees new evils lurk, new dangers lower;
 He asks for some great moral engine's force,
 To speed man's *spirit* on an equal course.
 As civilized achievement rises high,
 Mounts the dread tide of vice and misery.
 Has Education yet the secret gained
 Of Youth restrained, yet not too much restrained?
 When will young people cease to play the fool,
 And take some warning from their parents' school!
 Alas, cigars and oaths, I shrewdly fear,
 Get nearer to the cradle every year.
 And even in mental discipline alone,
 With all its lights, has Learning raised its tone?
 Is riper scholarship developed now,
 Than when an Abbot¹ smoothed the school-boy's
 brow?

¹ The former distinguished Preceptor of Exeter academy.

Is Intellect more patient and profound
Than when it delved in harder, narrower ground ?
Books also might improve by quarantines ;
Thought oft cries liberty, but license means ;
The Press, sometimes a foul prolific sty,
Makes the land noisome with its numerous fry.
Opinion's leaders rival Shakspeare's Puck,
Pert Speculation fairly runs amuck ;
Fantasy questions all established things,
Tired Reverence folds her once face-covering wings,
And, with some lightning truths by Genius given,
His daring apothegms shake earth and heaven.

So, if again to politics we turn,
Dark futures for our country we discern,
With parties, aims, machineries, and ways,
Undreamt of by our Hamiltons and Jays ;
None knowing, too, if our gigantic state
Will fall, or hold its own, by sheer dead-weight,
Of heterogeneous elements composed,
To the world's dregs our flood-gates all unclosed ;

While far across the vext, ship-fevered main,
Reactionary Europe hugs her chain.

Yet, let us own, amidst the general taint,
Proud Liberty endures some wise restraint;
The flood prevails not every place above,
Lights on some resting-spots the wandering Dove;
The germ that bourgeoned at our nation's birth,
Nobly assimilates the very earth;
Unchecked Democracies the Sabbath keep,
Fierce parties o'er a dying statesman weep,
And (civic self-control unknown before!)
Whole States resolve to pass the Cup no more;
The blessed *School* embowers Youth's flexile tree,
And Faith burns brighter, as it burns more free.
Science blasphemes no longer, as she pores,
And Comte, his Titan Law relaxed, adores!¹

¹ M. Comte, in his "Système de Politique Positive," published last year, at length recognises, with considerable personal sensibility, the moral and religious element in man, as a legitimate object of philosophical speculation.

Classmates, we know not where this maze shall
end;

To our own work we know that we must bend;
On other hands the task must be devolved,
Before these mighty problems can be solved.
For us, though welcoming each hopeful plan,
I deem our class conservative, to a man.
So with a prayer that all may yet be right,
Let us indulge in apter themes to-night.

One heart-born pleasure for our Student-race,
Is to behold a classmate's well-known face.
We do not meet him like another man,
He starts emotions that no other can.
Whether in throngs or wastes our footsteps bend,
Meet but a classmate, and we meet a friend.
Certes, if one *my* distant home but greet,
The door flies open for his welcome feet.
Our classmates know us as few others do,
Kind to our failings, to our merits true.
Hence our unfading, our unique delights,
When our "Fair Mother" holds her festal rites.

Who can forget that famed centennial year,
When Harvard hailed her sons from far and near?
What joy, what beckonings, what exchanged sur-
prise,
As at each other flashed inquiring eyes!
How changed, yet how the same, ourselves we
found,
Since last we parted on that classic ground!
The same old joking and peculiar ways,
That marked the intercourse of fresher days;
And yet the experience deep we could but see,
Ploughed by one quarter of a century!

To-night again such greetings we renew,—
O'er life's slant pathway memory's roses strew,—
Light with fresh tints our lingering sun's decline,—
And closer draw the invaded circle's line.

Ah yes, such pleasures have their dark reverse;
Through flowery beds rolls on the ruthless hearse;
Of those familiar forms we miss to-night,
Most are forever sundered from our sight.

Oft have I passed a mournful day, when came
 The new Triennial, starred at many a name.
 It seems but yesterday since Harvard's shade
 Saw us as Freshmen, curious and afraid.
 Ere long, what salient characters there sprang,
 What life and fire from our collisions rang!
 And now, a cohort of that valiant band
 Knows us no more beneath the spirit-land.
 What is the meaning of this shadowy scene?
 Where are the meteor-friendships that have been?

Pause we a moment o'er each name, and see
 Even in these few, mankind's epitome.

BAKER, of generous, independent haste,
 FARNHAM, of graceful phrase, and polished taste;
 STORY, that youthful miracle of Greek,
 HILDRETH, intent on politics to speak;
 COOPER, Refinement's many-cultured child;
 REED, meekly pious; WESTON, still and mild;
 PRENTISS, the spotless and the studious youth;
 LONE WATERHOUSE, through nature following truth;

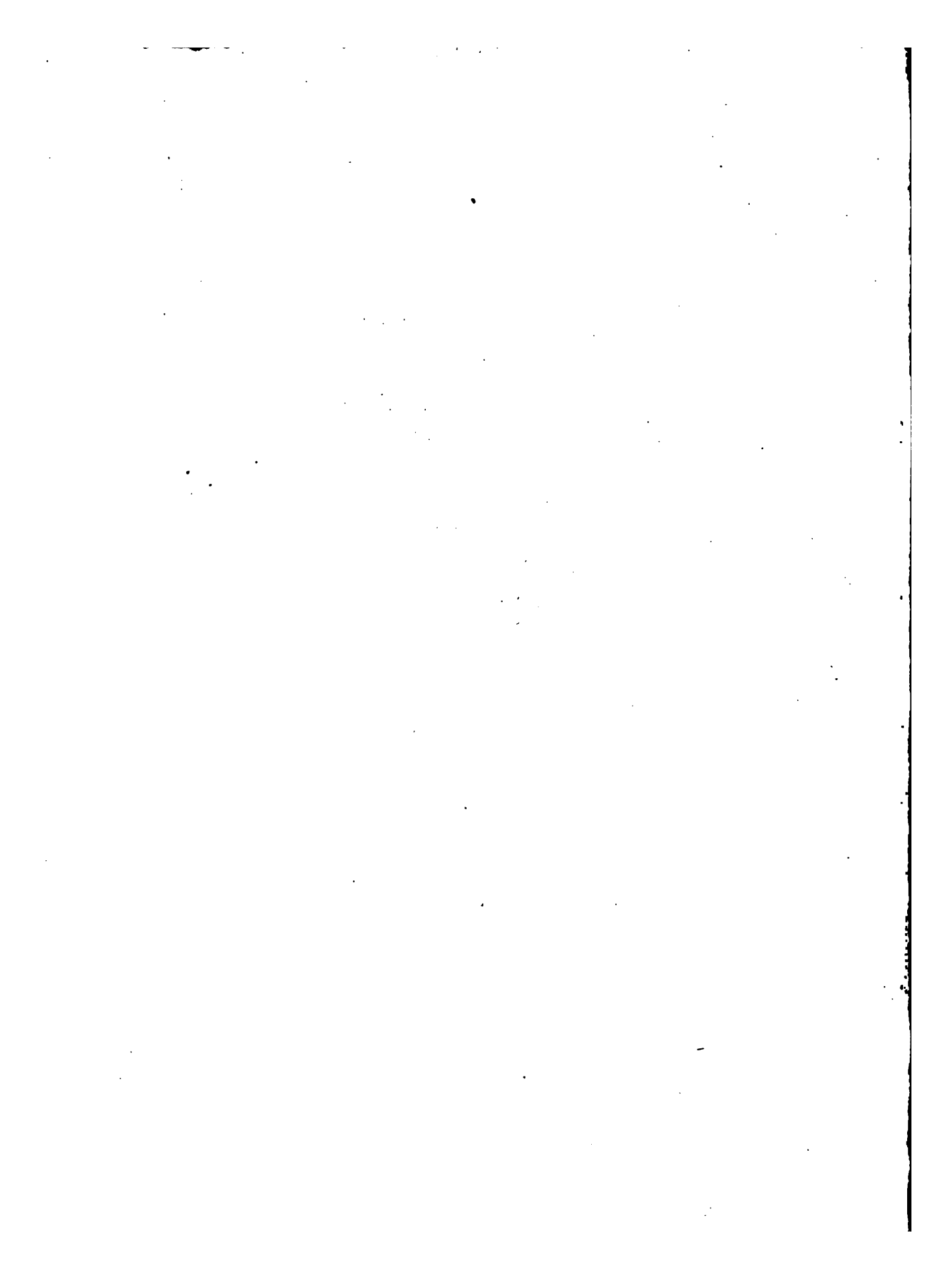
HUNT, like his own geometry, upright ;
 OTIS, the glass of fashion, frank and bright ;
 Good-natured WELD ; and unassuming GRAY ;
 ROGERS, with happy laugh, and merry play ;
 PUTNAM, wise, learned, and old enough to teach ;
 DAMON, of open heart, and fluent speech ;
 PERKINS, the social ; WILLIAMS, the retired ;
 And all with true class-fellowship inspired.

ONE grave and name we pass — but tremble still
 At passion's force, and self-indulgent will ;
 Owing the need of Heaven's restraining grace,
 To curb and sanctify our erring race.

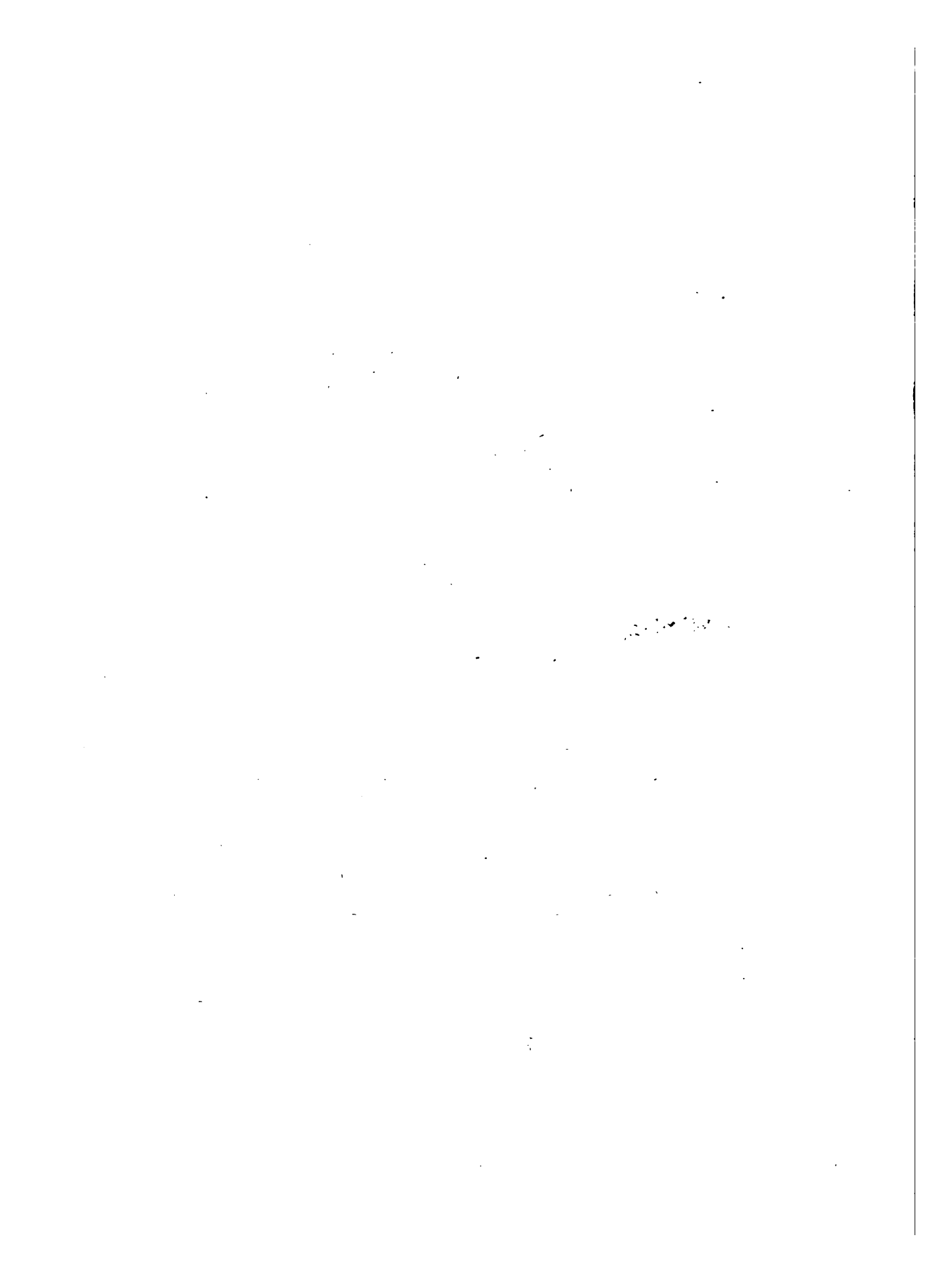
Brethren, that grace, in its abounding scope,
 Shed on *your* path, faith, peace, content, and hope !
 May children's children lead you down the way
 Of cheerful, useful, unperceived decay ;
 Not forced to toil too late for wearied self,
 And not too early laid upon the shelf !
 Blest with keen bodily and mental sight,
 May books still prove your solace and delight ;

And duly may your search be there, where lies,
Embedded near, the pearl of richest price!

Stay yet, dear friends; the Minstrel bids you toast
In pure, bright water, our accomplished host;
Who gives, one need not say, our class its name,
Tinged with the lustre of his well-earned fame.
Health for his labors, for his cares relief,
To him, our first and last unenvied chief!









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